

Sowerby Bridge Development Board

Tuesday 9th November 2021 6-8pm

Zoom meeting- ELECTRONIC INVITE

Chair- Cllr Audrey Smith

Board Member Attendees: Councillor Audrey Smith, Councillor Dot Foster, Councillor Adam Wilkinson, Councillor Jane Scullion, Gareth Baigent, Steve Priestley, Sam Irvine, Phil Hawdon, Justine Riccomini, Lauren Brundell

CMBC attendees: Richard Seaman, Sarah Richardson, Karen Houghton, Sarah Dyer, Fern Petrovic (minutes)

Members of the public: Shelia Eastwood

Apologies: Sarah Fanthorpe, Shebana Sadiq

1. Welcome and Introductions

Cllr Smith welcomed everyone to the meeting, apologies were noted.

2. Minutes of the last meeting minutes

No minutes were circulated due to staff sickness.

The last meetings minutes were picked up as part of the main agenda items.

In relation to the Town Square, awareness raising regarding the parking changes were discussed. It was agreed for SR to speak to CMBC Communications team regarding informing the public about forthcoming changes to the parking arrangements when the town square comes to fruition. **Action: SR to liaise with PH on this.**

RS was asked to update the project mapping document. **Action: RS**

Cllr Smith suggested that John Walker is invited to the next board meeting to discuss the future of the market and timescales for closure. **Action: SD to issue invite to John.**

Cllr Scullion has investigated the ownership of the public toilets and confirmed that these are owned by CMBC. PH will be issuing a plan to Stephen Hoyle in the Councils, Corporate Asset and Facilities Management Team (CAFM). The change of use has been discussed with RS and planning permission would be required. There has been an initial discussion to discuss procedural matters. Communications were briefly mentioned, it is crucial to keep the public informed of changes. Collaboration through the HAZ team to expand the communication remit could be considered to keep costs down.

Cllr Smith informed the board there has been two resignations from Board members Isolde Davey and Chris Hasling. She thanked both Board members for their contribution over the years. The recruitment of two new Board representatives will be needed.

3. Foundry Street Youth & Community Centre – update

As part of the future Council programme, there has been internal discussions regarding the future use of Foundry Street Youth and Community Centre. Concerns have been raised regarding the level of consultation which has taken place; queries from the public have come forward regarding how the asset can be retained and more effectively used. The Board were made aware that a petition has been published on Facebook. Following liaison with CAFM, Cllr Scullion will circulate a written response to the Board. **Action: Cllr Scullion.**

Cllr Scullion informed the Board that there is a £4m budget target cut for the directorate responsible for the asset. Because of this, CAFM are reviewing their land holdings to determine where savings can be made. The centre was deemed surplus to the directorates requirements after it was felt there is reduced need for it. The proposed disposal was put before Councillors, whereby objections were made.

CAFM are currently looking at the income of the building and the current usage. The condition of the building and costs associated is unknown at this present time.

An option to explore is a community asset transfer whereby the site could be disposed of to a community group for nil cost. To satisfy this option, the group would have to present a business case outlining their plans for the centre, evidence how it would meet community needs and demonstrate that they can financially support this proposal. Other successful community asset transfers such as the Space Community Centre in Rastrick and Hebden Bridge Town Hall were cited as examples.

Shelia Eastwood (representative of the Karate Club which trains in the Foundry Street Youth and Community Centre) was present to represent the views of the club following news of the centres potential closure. SE feels the data which CAFM have relied upon to make their judgement on current usage levels is inaccurate; SE reported there is on average 20 sessions running three times a week. She also feels the data used by CAFM was sourced from the signing in sheet which provided unreliable data as attendees do not always fill this in.

SE informed the Board that the centre is used by several groups including a dedicated specialist needs group, music group, contact services group, dancing groups and students who have been excluded by school etc. It is understood by SE that the centre was bought in 1972 by CMBC and a restrictive deed (which is believed to have since been removed in 2006) was placed on the title specifying it could only ever be used for a community service. Further marketing and promotion of the centre is needed to raise the profile of the centre with local groups.

SE challenged the notion that the building needs significant investment; the building was reroofed in 2008, a new boiler was installed and the sports hall is felt to be of good quality. Given the budget constraints, SE feels there is a mismanagement given the Karate Club are charged 75p an hour for their use; an increase in the usage charge should therefore be considered.

Conversations are needed regarding how the centre can be retained as a Sowerby Bridge asset. Suggestions were made such as using the centre for all SBDB in-person meetings. JR suggested whether there is scope to tie in with Active Calderdale for events. There is also the potential opportunity to move groups who use the North Bridge Leisure Centre to Foundry St when the temporary closure happens to make way for the new leisure centre development.

Cllr Wilkinson said the centre was historically well used but recent figures do indicate a decline. Whilst the centre is an asset to the town, budgetary constraints are requiring the Council to cut services to make savings.

In response to the community asset transfer option, the Karate club do not have the resources to take on the centre by themselves. It was queried whether the groups could use the centre up until an agreed time, giving them chance to consider devising a business plan if the asset transfer option was something they wish to explore **Action: Cllr Scullion to make enquiries with CAFM on this point.** It was agreed that a meeting should take place with Cllr Smith, Cllr Scullion and SE outside of the meeting to discuss this in further detail. **Action: Cllr Smith to set up separate meeting to discuss further.**

4. Hollins Lane – update on public consultation

Ward Member consultation has been completed for the road closure and this can now go to formal public consultation. RS is not aware of the timescales associated to the consultation period or when this will commence. **Action: RS to make enquiries with Mary Farrar on the above and feedback to the Board.**

5. Working Party updates

Town Square- due to confusion about whether the Board officially voted for the commissioning of a structural engineer for the design work for the foundations of the lock gates, the Board went on to formally approve this purchase. There is a fee associated to this of £500. SI proposed the spend, Cllr Foster second this and the Board members voted for the commission. A purchase order will need to be raised by the Neighbourhoods team **Action: SD to raise purchase order.**

It is felt more effort is required to agree a way forward. It was therefore proposed that a separate meeting takes place with the working group to agree actions and bring these to the next meeting. **Action: Town Square working group.**

Cllr Scullion has spoken to CMBC's procurement team and given that this is a relatively small spend (£500), there is no requirement for a tender process; there does however need to be a clear documented process for decision making. The Rushbearing event on 3/4th September 2022 could be used as a target deadline for the project.

It was asked that PH outlines in writing any outstanding actions which are needed to be undertaken and by when. **Action: PH.**

Wainhouse Tower Project- an update paper was shared with the Board prior to the meeting. Good progress has been made in the last six to eight weeks. A report is awaited from the recent Health & Safety visit and this will outline future approach to openings. Following receipt of the report, the group will be able to discuss further how to take forward the partnership model which would involve

Calderdale Council retaining the ownership of the asset and the formation of a community group entity who would be assigned terms & conditions to utilise and run the use of the asset. May bank holiday for opening is been considered to tie in with the Platinum Jubilee.

It was asked that all Board members send Cllr Smith details of which working groups they want to be part of and then Cllr Smith will distribute an email confirming the members of each. **Action: All.**

6. Litter Free Sowerby Bridge Signage

JR is speaking to Adrian Mitchell regarding designs to deter litter dropping for the town; there are 3 designs been considered. These will be placed around the entrances/exits of the town and strategic places where there are frequent reports of littering. Sponsorship of the signs is been obtained.

Placements of the signs needs to be carefully considered to avoid visibility hazards etc. **Action: SR to put JR in touch with manager of green spaces.**

7. HAZ programme update

Lockhill Mills is under offer and the conveyancing process is underway.

A clerk of works has been appointed for the corridor improvement programme. Colleagues are working to agree the delivery programme which will be available in winter 2021 with work expected to start in spring 2022. **Action: RS to update spreadsheet. Action: RS to investigate planning permission for fencing behind Roxy's nightclub.**

KH reported that they are nearly there with the grant. A Fire and Water meeting will take place on 10th November. There were some concerns raised over Council's standard grant terms which colleagues are working through. Things are progressing well with the town hall building which will house a restaurant and also be available for community use.

A conservation architect is overseeing the grants programme and recruitment can commence for a project manager.

Regarding the cultural programme, Fire and Water have commissioned a community arts co-ordinator called Grace. Paperwork has been submitted to Historic England. It was suggested that Grace is invited to a future meeting. **Action: KH to invite Grace to future meeting. Action: KH to update spreadsheet for the programme.**

8. Terms of Reference

The terms of reference needs circulating and updating **Action: SR to circulate.**

Governance documents also need circulating and reviewing as well as looking at the webpage/logo. It was agreed that a meeting will be held on 14th December to discuss governance, procedures, terms of reference and working groups of the Board.

9. AOB

Floods and land use will be discussed at the next meeting.

Cllr Foster will be making enquiries with Network Rail regarding recent activity happening at the Bridges **Action: RS to send contact details for Network Rail to Cllr Foster.**

Action: SD to schedule 2022 meetings.